SDI
Service Desk Institute

Inspiring service desks to be brilliant

Wellbeing at Work

Member Report

May 2019

About the Author

The author of this report is SDI's Service Desk Specialist Jamie Bell. Jamie is committed to providing insightful and practical guidance and advice to the service desk industry. Jamie's work with a wide range of service teams, internal and external, provides him with service management expertise across a variety of business sectors. You can find more of Jamie's work on the SDI Blog and can follow him @thepapabell on twitter.

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Introduction

Emotional wellbeing has become a hot topic across all industries in recent years, with the publicity garnered helping to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing as a serious issue. Many people spend more time at work than anywhere else, so it's important that organisations play their part in supporting positive wellbeing.

Many successful, forward-thinking organisations will have strategies in place to promote, develop and maintain positive wellbeing within their workplace. The benefits of having a healthy, switched-on workforce may not be obvious to everyone and we will cover some of these further on in this report.

In addition, in this member report we will look at some data, facts and common misconceptions around emotional wellbeing, and how the Service Desk Institute's Global Best Practice Standard for Service Desk is leading the way in recognising organisations that give wellbeing the attention it deserves.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a term used to refer the emotional and mental state of a person, how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life.

Wellbeing can change in a moment, can change from day to day, week to week or even year to year. A person's state of wellbeing can have an impact on how they behave, their attitudes, their productivity, their relationships, their emotions, their physical and of course mental health.

Understanding the impact of wellbeing on a person's ability to be productive, maintain a good attitude and ability to build effective relationships should be a priority for any organisation.

What can affect wellbeing?

We are all different. No two people are the same. What impacts the wellbeing of one person will not necessarily impact the wellbeing of another person in the same way.

What we can say for sure is that no-one is immune to adverse wellbeing. At some point a person is bound to feel low, upset or stressed. Sometimes, unavoidable life events can have a significant unexpected impact too. Common events that may affect wellbeing include;

- **Loneliness**
- **Relationship issues**
- **Problems at work**
- **Problems with money**
- **Bereavement**

These types of events are typically easier to spot, and therefore recover from, than those where there is no clear outward reason for why a person may be experiencing adverse wellbeing.

Other common, but often overlooked, contributors to adverse wellbeing include;

- **Stress**
- **Inactivity**
- **Sleep disturbance**

Problems at work

Delving a little deeper in to causes of adverse wellbeing in the workplace, it's important to consider some causes that can be overlooked. It doesn't just have to be bad managers or a toxic culture that can bring about adverse wellbeing, it's possible that advancements in technology, whilst bringing increased productivity and other benefits to the organisation, can have a negative impact on employee wellbeing. For example: being unable to 'switch-off' due to being constantly connected or relying on IT or devices to an extent where their failure results in increased frustration. It's paramount that organisations consider the impact that technology can have, both good and bad.

There is often a level of stigma associated with adverse wellbeing. You have probably heard stories and many of us may have even witnessed people being made to feel bad for taking time off work for legitimate reasons, perhaps even stress related. This report has already acknowledged that we are all different and not one person is the same as another. One person may be able to cope better under certain circumstances than someone else. Addressing preconceptions and ill-informed attitudes towards adverse wellbeing can be just as important as addressing its causes.

Regardless of the reason for suffering from adverse wellbeing, there are steps that a person and an organisation can take to improve and maintain a state of positive wellbeing.

Impact of wellbeing

A workforce performing at optimal levels would be desirable for any team manager. Achieving this is not an easy task and far too often an organisation will fall into the trap of believing that the only way to get the best out of a team is to ramp up KPIs, hold more meetings, increase salary, etc. Whilst that may work for a small number of people, a key ingredient is frequently overlooked, supporting the wellbeing of staff.

If a person has positive wellbeing, they can be expected to:

- **Cope well with the stresses of daily life**
- **Be productive in work and at home**
- **Express emotions**
- **Judge oneself with reasonable and realistic standards**
- **Feel confident**
- **Build and maintain effective relationships**
- **Contribute to suggestions and discussions**
- **Support others**
- **Adapt quickly to change and uncertainty**

As such, the reverse is true for all the above where a person is struggling with adverse wellbeing.

What can my organisation do to help?

At the Service Desk Institute, we recognise that emotional wellbeing should be high up on the list of priorities for organisations that wish to be successful in today's world. To lead the way in our industry, we have included criteria in the Global Best Practice Standard for Service Desk, enabling organisations who demonstrate commitment to 'Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing' to receive a maturity rating validating their efforts. However, raising awareness of emotional wellbeing within the workplace is just one aspect.

Tips for Success

Earlier this year an article was published on the SDI blog covering the topic of employee satisfaction. It may come as a surprise that the number one contributing factor to the satisfaction of employees within the workplace is the organisation's culture and values. Organisations who work with SDI and demonstrate a clear, positive culture and values provide the following for their workforce:

• Training

This may seem a little obvious to many but ensuring that staff receive training related to wellbeing and stress management will empower everyone to be able to recognise the signs of adverse wellbeing in themselves and others. Furthermore, training will help develop skills for managers and staff to be able to have supportive conversations.

• Physical health

One of the main contributors to adverse wellbeing is poor physical health. Organisations can offer support and in some cases even incentives to help people reach and maintain good physical health. This can include providing healthy meal options and encouraging more movement through exercise. A simple example of this would be where an organisation subsidizes a gym membership.

• Community

Many people achieve a feel-good factor by helping within their local community. Forward-thinking organisations will engage with the local community and afford time for staff to get involved with fundraising events, regeneration initiatives and charitable activities.

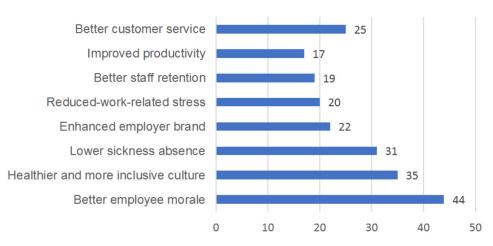### • Honesty and transparency

Another organisational trait that can deliver great results for employee wellbeing and satisfaction is creating a culture that promotes openness, transparency and honesty. An open-door environment that enables staff to talk to all levels of leadership encourages communication and collaboration. Organisations that demonstrate a high level of maturity in the Leadership concept of the Global Best Practice Standard for Service Desk are enablers of this type of culture.

Organisational benefits

We have already established the impact that positive wellbeing can have on an individual, but what about the impact to the organisation?

In May 2018, CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development, in partnership with Simplyhealth, released a survey report titled Health and Well-being at work. Within the report you will find data that demonstrates tangible benefits that organisations have realised as a result of supporting emotional wellbeing initiatives. See below, the graph shows data as a percentage of 748 organisations that responded to the survey:

Health and Wellbeing Achievements
Past 12 Months (% of 748 Respondents)

Achievement	%
Better customer service	25
Improved productivity	17
Better staff retention	19
Reduced-work-related stress	20
Enhanced employer brand	22
Lower sickness absence	31
Healthier and more inclusive culture	35
Better employee morale	44

You can see that 44% of organisations achieved better morale, whilst 35% benefited from a more inclusive culture, 31% from lower absence due to sickness, 22% of organisations said that their brand was enhanced and 25% of organisations said that they were now delivering a better service to their customers.

A wellbeing report published by Mind in 2017 provided data which suggested the larger an organisation, the greater the proportion of their operational spend goes towards workplace wellbeing. In fact, the report says that the operational spend set aside for workplace wellbeing for large organisations is on average 11%, with small to medium sized organisations setting aside just 0.5%.

An organisation that is committed to supporting emotional wellbeing can benefit from a more productive workforce, benefit from being recognised as operating with good ethics and morals, and benefit from attracting and retaining talent.

As with the impact of adverse wellbeing on an individual, it's plausible to theorise here that the reverse would be true. Organisations that do not invest and commit to supporting emotional wellbeing should not expect to experience the workforce benefits that come from doing so. This should hopefully demonstrate why organisations should be making employee wellbeing a top priority, if they are not already doing so.

Conclusion

Wellbeing at work should be a top priority for every organisation. The old adage, coined by Richard Branson that if you look after your staff, your staff will look after your customers rings true.

Whilst the concept of 'looking after your staff' is quite a broad one, there is clear data which demonstrates that a positive, happy, motivated, satisfied and healthy workforce can bring tangible benefits at the organisation level.

It would be impossible to cover everything that an organisation could to do help ensure they create and maintain a workforce with positive wellbeing, and neither could you expect every organisation to get it right 100% of the time, especially as every individual person is different. However, by embracing some of the suggestions outlined in this report, an organisation would be well on its way to realising some of the benefits that come with being committed to supporting emotional wellbeing.

About SDI

The SDI company mission is to inspire service desks to be brilliant. To achieve this mission SDI has developed a set of goals by which it aims to inspire service desks to:

Embrace: To raise the quality of service delivery by valuing best practice

Engage: To create an inspiring and engaging customer experience

Invest: To empower their teams to be inspired, take action and be better

Shine: To demonstrate and deliver exceptional business value

SDI sets the globally recognised best practice service desk standards that provide clear and measurable benchmarks for service desk operations and professionals. The standards are designed to encourage service desks to embrace and value best practice in order to raise the quality of service delivery.

For more information about SDI please visit
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